






GRAPHICS CARDS AND FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

| Graphics cards | | | Last month's position | First reviewed | Price (ex VAT) | Warranty | Graphics processor | Installed RAM | DDR RAM | Ramdac | 4xAGP | Maximum resolution@ refresh rate | Colours@ 800x600 | DVI |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|------------------------------|---------------|---------|--------|-------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| Details | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 1 | Gainward GeForce3 Ti/450 Golden Sample 0870 220 0700 www.gainward.de | 1 | Apr 02 | £135 | 3-year | nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200 | 64MB | Y | 350MHz | Y | 2,048x1,536 @75Hz | 16.7 million | N |
|  | 2 | Creative 3D Blaster GeForce3 Titanium 200 No Telephone www.creative.com | 2 | Apr 02 | £170 | 3-year | nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200 | 64MB | Y | 350MHz | Y | 2,048x1,536 @75Hz | 16.7 million | Y |
| | 3 | Elsa Gladiac 721 020 7294 0114 www.elsa.com | 3 | Jan 02 | £155 | 6-year | nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200 | 64MB | Y | 350MHz | Y | 2,048x1,536 @75Hz | 16.7 million | Y |
| | 4 | ATI Radeon 8500 01628 477 788 www.ati.com | 4 | Jan 02 | £212 | 3-year | ATI Radeon 8500 | 64MB | Y | 400MHz | Y | 2,048x1,536 @85Hz | 16.7 million | Y |
| | 5 | Hercules 3D Prophet III Titanium 200 020 8686 5600 www.hercules-uk.com | 5 | Jan 02 | £212 | 3-year | nVidia GeForce3 Titanium 200 | 64MB | Y | 350MHz | Y | 2,048x1,536 @75Hz | 16.7 million | Y |

| Flat-panel displays | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------|-------------------|-----------|
| Details | | | Last month's position | First reviewed | Price (ex VAT) | Warranty | Screen size | Maximum resolution | Pixel pitch | Dimensions (width x depth x height) | Weight | Digital connector | USB ports |
|  | 1 | LG Flatron LCD 782LE 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk | 1 | Apr 02 | £502 | 3-year | 17in | 1,280x1,024 | 0.26mm | 399x235x427mm | 7.3kg | Y | 2 |
|  | 2 | Sharp LL-T15V1 0161 205 2333 www.sharp.co.uk | 2 | Apr 02 | £299 | 3-year | 15in | 1,024x768 | 0.30mm | 340x137x322mm | 4.4kg | N | N |
| | 3 | LG Flatron LCD 882LE 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk | 3 | Feb 02 | £749 | 3-year | 18.1in | 1,280x1,024 | 0.28mm | 434x235x443mm | 9kg | Y | 4 |
| | 4 | Philips 170B2B 020 8869 2166 www.philips.co.uk | 4 | Apr 02 | £615 | 3-year | 17in | 1,280x1,024 | 0.26mm | 446x181x471mm | 8kg | Y | 4 |
| | 5 | Eizo FlexScan L685 01483 719 505 www.eizo.co.uk | 5 | Apr 02 | £989 | 3-year | 18.1in | 1,280x1,024 | 0.28mm | 399x203x404mm | 8kg | Y | 4 |

GRAPHICS CARDS

1 Gainward GeForce3 Ti/450 Golden Sample


 Gainward's may not be the easiest range of graphics cards to get hold of (although online merchants Watford and Simply now carry its products), but with their combination of low prices and high-quality components, they're worth hunting down. The GeForce3 PowerPack Ti/450 is a perfect example. Employing the mid-range GeForce3 Titanium 200 chip from nVidia's Titanium family, this card delivers sizzling speed, easily shattering 120fps (frames per second) at a resolution of 1,024x768. Pile on the detail and, even under the most demanding circumstances, you'll find it still hugging the 50fps mark. The hardware specifications are as good as any Titanium 200 card on the market, offering 64MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, and extensive 2,048x1,536 resolution support. TV-out lets you watch television, but the lack of a DVI (digital visual interface) is disappointing.

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FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

1 LG Flatron LCD 782LE


 The price premium of flat-panel displays over CRT (cathode ray tube) models has been shrinking rapidly, and LG's 782LE is an example of this. The 17in screen offers a maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 with a 150-degree viewing angle. It provides a good colour palette with pin-sharp image definition. In addition to the traditional analogue Dsub connector you'll also find support for DVI (digital visual interface). DVI offers a completely digital route from the graphics card to the display, eliminating image degradation due to analogue/digital conversion. In addition, the 782LE includes a two-port USB hub, providing a convenient point to plug in any peripherals, without delving around the back of your PC. The LG's killer feature, however, is its £502 price tag. It may be more than a CRT, but it represents a small price to pay for a sleek, space-saving display.

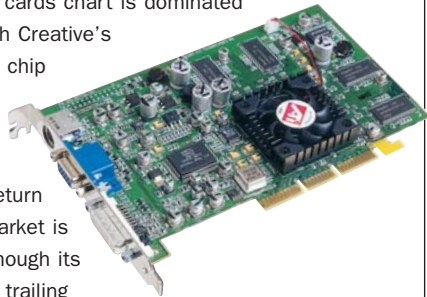
→ Turn to page 142 to continue the Flat-panel displays chart



GRAPHICS CARDS

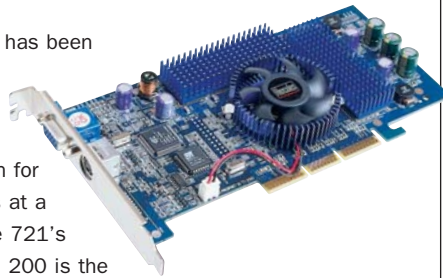
2 Creative 3D Blaster GeForce3 Titanium 200

 The Graphics cards chart is dominated by nVidia, with Creative's Titanium 200 chip featuring the same advanced architecture as the Best Buy's GeForce3. Creative's return to the graphics card market is a bit more surprising though its high price tag leaves it trailing behind the Gainward. The DVI (digital visual interface) connector ensures you will be protected if a digital revolution finally kicks off, and TV-out and a couple of games add spice to the Creative's bundle.



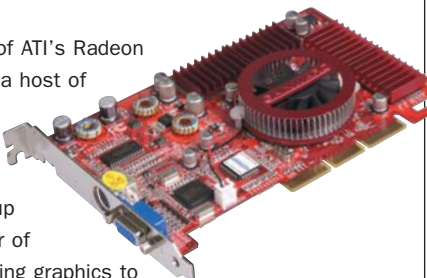
3 Elsa Gladiac 721

This former Best Buy has been forced down the chart by better models, but it's still a good option for GeForce3 capabilities at a reasonable price. The 721's chip, the GeForce3 Ti 200 is the mid-range option in nVidia's new line of processors. Although it lacks the cutting-edge acceleration of the GeForce3 Ti 500 cards, you'll only notice the difference under demanding conditions. Better still is the price tag: £155 is an excellent deal considering the Gladiac's ability.



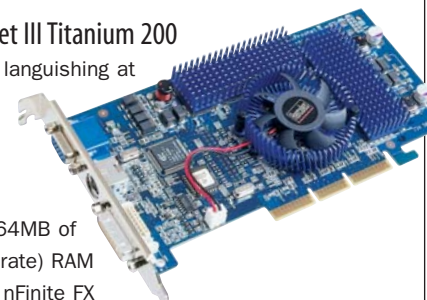
4 ATI Radeon 8500

The latest incarnation of ATI's Radeon chip, the 8500, offers a host of stunning features. Hydravision enables multi-monitor support, while TruForm breaks up surfaces into a number of smaller sections, allowing graphics to be more detailed. However, the 8500's unstable performance and poor XP compatibility makes it appear to have been rushed out before it's ready. In addition, the Radeon's high price of £212 no longer offers value for money.



5 Hercules 3D Prophet III Titanium 200

The Prophet III may be languishing at the bottom of the chart, but it's still an impressive card. The Lightspeed Memory Architecture manages 64MB of fast DDR (double data rate) RAM and the programmable nFinite FX engine delivers excellent graphics. And it's no slouch either, achieving great acceleration at most resolutions.



FLAT-PANEL DISPLAYS

2 Sharp LL-T15V1

 Just as a 17in flat-panel offers the same viewing area as a 19in CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor, a 15in panel is comparable with a 17in CRT model. Again, there's still a price premium but it is decreasing. While Sharp's LL-T15V1 has no DVI (digital visual interface) connector, USB hub or pivot functionality (the increasingly popular ability to rotate the screen 90 degrees into portrait position), image quality is good and well defined. It offers a maximum resolution of 1,024x768 with a 160-degree viewing angle. For £299, the Sharp is a proficient and very affordable model.



3 LG Flatron LCD 882LE

At first glance, £749 seems rather a high price to pay for a flat-panel. However, the LG Flatron LCD 882LE is an 18.1in model – a screen that, in reality, offers a greater viewing area than a 19in CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor. Its hardware specifications, including a 160-degree viewing angle and 0.28mm pixel pitch are standard but more than capable. Although the maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 seems a waste of such a large screen, you'll be hard pressed to find an 18.1in display that beats it.



4 Philips 170B2B

The Philips 170B2B is a 17in model with a 160-degree viewing angle. The display stretches to 1,280x1,024 and it supports both Dsub and DVI (digital visual interface) connections. With a rich colour palette and good intensity, the 170B2B is pleasant to use. The microphone is a bonus for video-conferencing, and it also supports pivot, allowing you to rotate the display into portrait mode, with software to electronically rotate the view for you. At £615 the 170B2B has everything you need.



5 Eizo FlexScan L685

Judged on features, design and performance alone, the Eizo FlexScan is a superb display. At 18.1in, the screen seems vast, which is emphasised by its thin frame. The L685 can not only pivot, but can be adjusted vertically so you can ensure that it's in just the right position for you. There's a four-port USB hub and the colours are intense with extremely good image definition. The only down side is that at £989 it is more than most people want to spend.

